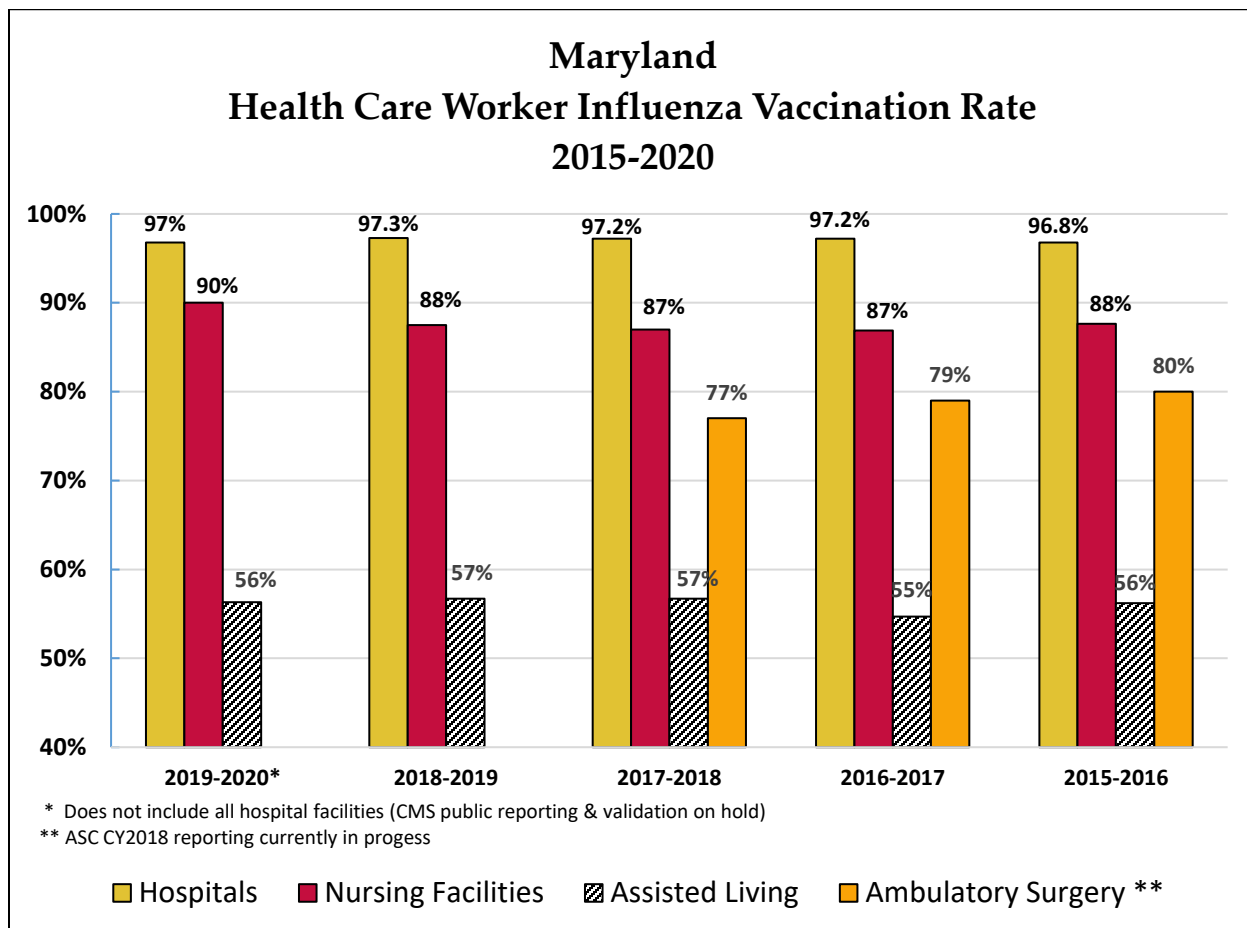


Health Care Worker (HCW) Flu Vaccination and You

The 2019-2020 flu season in the United States was moderate, with an estimated 38 million people sick with flu, 18 million visits to a health care provider for flu, 400,000 hospitalizations for flu, and 22,000 flu deaths. On average, over the past five flu seasons, approximately 500,000 people were hospitalized each year, and close to 36,000 people died each year.¹ Seniors are at especially high risk for severe illness and death related to the flu.¹⁻⁵ In recent years, it's estimated that between 70%–85% of seasonal flu-related deaths occurred in people 65 years and older.⁴ Individuals in long term care facilities are at particularly high risk for severe respiratory illnesses due to the flu, due to their underlying medical conditions.⁶⁻¹⁴

What Are Maryland Health Care Facilities Doing to Protect Patients?

Health care worker vaccination is a very good way to slow down or prevent the spread of the flu in health care settings^{10-12, 15}, including long-term care settings. The research on this topic supports the idea that increasing health care worker vaccination reduces flu-like sickness^{16, 18, 19} and death¹⁶⁻¹⁹.



Health Care Worker Flu Vaccination

Maryland hospitals lead the way in health care worker (HCW) vaccination rates, with some of the highest vaccination rates in the United States. Hospitals have higher HCW flu vaccination percentages because all hospitals in the state of Maryland have rules requiring HCW vaccination. Maryland nursing homes and ambulatory surgical facilities also have high vaccination rates. Assisted living facilities in Maryland have the lowest HCW vaccination percentage. The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) continues to work with these facilities to improve their HCW vaccination rates.

It has been a challenge for long term care facilities, including nursing homes and assisted living facilities, to implement mandatory vaccination policies because some of the facilities have limited resources with which to implement and enforce these policies. However, if long term care facilities with the available resources were to implement mandatory vaccination policies, the percentage of HCWs vaccinated against the flu would greatly increase. The MHCC provides several resources to help the facilities achieve vaccination goals.

To find the employee flu vaccination rate for a healthcare facility in your area, click on one of the categories below.

[Assisted Living](#)

[Hospitals](#)

[Nursing Homes](#)

[Outpatient Surgery](#)

Influenza and COVID-19

This year it is more important than ever to get a flu shot, given the possibility that both flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will spread this winter. This will place a tremendous burden on the health care system and result in many more illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths than during a regular flu season.

A flu shot this season can help reduce the burden on our health care systems already responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DO YOUR PART! PROTECT YOURSELF. GET A FLU SHOT!

You can protect yourself and your loved ones by getting your annual flu shot. Each year the flu season is different and can start as early as October and last as late as May. A yearly flu vaccine from your primary care physician, community health center or health clinic can help protect you and your loved ones from the flu²⁰.

The MHCC monitors and reports on HCW worker vaccination in hospitals, ambulatory surgical facilities, assisted living facilities and nursing homes. The MHCC is proud to report that the average percentage of Maryland HCWs receiving the flu shot has exceeded the national average for the last five flu seasons.

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